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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

BOOK NOTICES.

"THE LATE MRS. NULL" is Frank P. Stockton's first novel, his first attempt at a sustained story and a plot of any magnitude. It is the experience of a city man who, loving a belle and a heiress, but lacking the modern experience necessary to give him the proper amount of courage to tell her so, endeavors to learn of her preferences and taste by seeking the other man to whom she had at one time been engaged. In looking for this party the nerveless lover makes use of a private detective bureau known as a Society for the Procurement of Information. The situations into which this search leads the young man, both before and after he finds its object, are frequently humorous and always picturesque. The heroine, Mrs. Null, is a well drawn character, while her aunt is one of the best we can recall since the days of Pomona. It must be admitted, of course, that there is a shade of disappointment in the work to one who has read and enjoyed (as one must) "Rudder Grange," that was fresh and full of domestic excitement; upon each page it was a novelty, an original in every sense. The negro characters seem to be after life, although they are not sufficiently lazy to deceive one into thinking they are actual pictures. The introduction of extreme personages or nationalities or races into the thread of a story is hardly interesting to the general reader, and, while from the locale of the plot it may often be necessary, they should be subordinated to the same extent that they are in life. A guest does not know and does not care what the servants at the house where he is visiting say or do or think, and we see no reason why the opinions and gossip of the kitchen and laundry should be ventilated and enlarged upon as it is too often in novels, and as it is to too great an extent in Mr. Stockton's. While this story can never be considered one of our remarkable productions it is pleasant reading and would well repay one for the time devoted to it. (Scribners' Sons, N. Y.)

A RECENT volume in The Fine Art Library is "A Manual of Greek Archaeology," by Maxime Collignon. It is as its name implies, a history of Greek architecture, sculpture, jewelry, etc., and on these subjects it is quite complete, as it might easily be. There has been such a vast quantity of material to draw on for this Greek writing, and the material has been so very accessible ever since the first writer discovered it and told about it, that each succeeding writer has simply copied the preceding writer as to facts, occasionally having the decency to change the phraseology into his own language. It is very much so with this volume; there is nothing new in it; the information is all reliable, no doubt, and if one has no other work upon the subject, this book is a useful one to own; but the illustrations and the incidents are all literary and artistic chestnuts, the same plans of Greek temples and the same legless and headless statues are shown as were shown in books published years ago. There are pediments, friezes, coronas, gutters, pillars; the usual instruction on the Doric and Ionic and Corinthian orders, the same propositions and the same hypothesis throughout. This is not said in an adverse spirit, for the book is complete and useful, but with the hope that it may meet the eye of some new literary aspirant contemplating copying what has been given us on this subject and stay his scheme. (Cassell & Co., N. Y.)

A VERY interesting book is that recently published by George J. Coombes (New York), entitled "Books and Bookmen," and written by Andrew Lang. It is a review, divided into chapters, of the men who have made books and those who have gathered them; it tells of the eccentricities of both, of the latter especially, for they have the most noticeable eccentricities to tell about. There is a chapter devoted to Literary Forgeries, touching cleverly upon those examples of early viciousness, Chatterton and Ireland, and deploring the display they made of the pretended learning of heavily wigged and wise looking societies devoted to the study of Shakespeare or the elucidation of complex classic remains, all of them imposed upon by the imitations of their favorite study by a burlesque upon the very subject they had devoted their lives to understand, and imposed upon, too, by boys, clever, it is true, but still boys. There are other chapters, too, just as interesting, no doubt, and just as pleasant reading, written in Mr. Lang's agreeable manner. There are some words given to the Registers of Country Parishes, most peculiar institutions and having some peculiar incidents to relate. In fact the volume while ostensibly written for the book-lover, appeals to every one who reads, and is too good to be wasted upon the shelf or permitted to remain unsought in the store of its publisher.

THE MAGIC OF A VOICE, a novel by Margaret Russell Macfarlane, which Messrs. Cassell & Company have in press, is a story of country life among the higher classes of Mecklenburg. It is a musical novel and the characters are drawn from life. The author's style is simple and direct, and the story has a special interest on account of the information it gives in regard to the manners and customs of a type of German society rarely presented to the novel reader.

A NEW volume of the Fine Art Library is "The Education of the Artist," by Ernest Chesneau, translated by Clara Bell. It is an admirable discourse on the proper training for an artist, how to perfect the scholar and how to cultivate the better art sensibilities. The author strikes the popularity of the profession among young men in a paragraph that is worthy of reproduction. He says: "How many lads 'take up art,' as they say, simply because in their fond dreams it consists in smoking cigarettes, wearing a red jersey and a soft felt hat, getting up rowdy studio parties, making speeches in beer shops and sleeping in the sun in summer time or by the fire in winter! When once they have thoroughly convinced themselves that in art, as in everything else, they must work, they will not 'take up art.'" And in another place, speaking of the different fields open to an artist, says: "Many an artist who fails miserably when he tries to execute a great work of painting or sculpture, is born with a real genius for ornament, and will rise to distinction in decorative art." A chapter follows later on upon decoration and the decorator, where the opportunities opened by the one to the other are well indicated. The volume is a most useful one.

THE Springfield Republican is publishing in its weekly issue a series of articles upon the war written by local veterans whose reminiscences as commanders and privates will prove as interesting in their way as the more extended experiences of army commanders. While the movements and thoughts of the prominent generals have an enormous value to the country at large, the every-day life of the lesser lights lets us into the real, hard work and dangers and enjoyment of those who did the fighting as differing from those who did the planning. The series is well worth reading.

NO. XIII. The story of the Lost Vestal, is interesting as are all of Emma Marshall's works. It is a cleverly told history of the Vestal, whose statue bears no name or mark, tells who she was and what she did that entitled her to this anonymous distinction. Naturally, the cause is found to be jealousy—a characteristic that even Vestals, it seems, could not shake themselves clear of. The book is published by Cassell & Co., (New York), is handsomely printed and bound.

THE May number of the *Inland Architect and Builder* is unusually attractive and valuable. The leading articles are reminiscences of the late architect, H. H. Richardson, who ranked at the head of his profession in the United States, written by P. B. Wight, and a practical illustrated essay on Brickwork, by George Beaumont. Reports of the Nebraska State Convention of Architects and of the Cleveland meeting of the National Engineers' Society are given, besides building news from over one hundred western cities. Among the illustrations are the new Court House at Madison, Wis., the West Chicago Club House, a design by Architect Beman for a Grant memorial, and several well designed residences by prominent architects. Published by The Inland Publishing Co., Chicago.

THE June issue of *Demorest's Monthly Magazine* opens with an entertaining article on Mary Anderson, the first of a series written under the general title of "The American Drama and its Typical Stars," by Jennie June. A Love Story is the name over which an engraved frontispiece presents to us two classic figures of a more or less Grecian type admiring each other upon a stone seat also somewhat Greek. There is quite a variety of articles running through the following pages, some fairly good, others just about readable. There is one feature, however, about the monthly which will strike its readers, we think, rather unfavorably. Its pages have been devoted, heretofore, to fashions, and that seemed to be the feature or mission of the paper with such purely literary articles as might be given acting as incidental. With this June issue, however, the fashions are abbreviated to the second place and the literary pretensions are prominently first. We trust we are not about to lose our best fashion paper to gain a second-rate literary magazine.

THE Rainbow Library of Cassell & Co. (N. Y.) booms along steadily, turning out flame-colored volumes of more or less exciting narrative, all of them worthy of reading and some of them quite clever. Among the latest are "Old Fullerson's Clerk," "Natasqua," "A Prince of Darkness," and "Witness my Hand," selling at the rational price of twenty-five cents each and serving a literary food for the masses.

"JOHN BODEWIN'S TESTIMONY" (\$1.50). Mary Hallock Foote's story of the Rocky Mountain mining-camps, recently published serially in *The Century*, has just been brought out in a handsome 12mo. volume, uniform with the same author's previous novel, "The Led Horse Claim," by Ticknor & Co., Boston.

MESSRS. TICKNOR & COMPANY have published:
The Saunterer, by Charles Goodrich Whiting. 1 vol., 16mo.; illustrated.

New revised editions of the American Guide Books.
New England. With sixteen maps.
The White Mountains.
The Maritime Provinces.